

TO THE
PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND.

*On the Meeting at Paisley, and on the
Qualifications of Ministers.*

I have received many letters of late, and one from Montrose, in Scotland, in particular, relative to an *exchange* of the Register. Being almost constantly out of London, and taking no part in the distribution or sale of the Register, it would be very inconvenient for me to attempt a compliance with requests, which I might, under other circumstances, find no difficulty in complying with. I take this opportunity of begging many correspondents to believe, that, though I have not time to answer their letters, I always pay attention to, and profit from, as far as I am able, the information they are so good as to give me.—My very best acknowledgements are due to the gentleman, who has been so kind as to send me a small pamphlet, containing the *Speeches and Petition* of the late Meeting at *Paisley*. The principles expressed in that publication are admirable. The clearness of the statements contained in the speeches; the management of the matter; the ingenuity and force of the arguments; the spirit, eloquence and impressiveness of the language; all these give to those proceedings the stamp of superiority, and do great honour to Scotland. I wish the account of these proceedings could be read by every man in the kingdom. I do not believe, that so much talent is possessed by all the twenty-six peers and the forty-five commoners as is possessed by the Speakers at the *Paisley Meeting*. At least, if the former do possess as much talent, they have never, as far as I have been able to perceive, discovered but a very small portion of it.—The speeches have, indeed, had the advantage of being corrected, and,

probably, improved, by the speakers. But, this only says, then, at least, that they are able to *write* such speeches; and, such ability falls to the lot of very few men. This publication contains a most complete and pleasing proof of the large stock of information, of the just and humane principles, of the public spirit, and of the wisdom and ability of our bretheren to the North of the Tweed. I have read with great attention the accounts of the proceedings at all the popular Meetings which have been held of late, and I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion, that the proceedings at *Paisley* bear away the palm. They are a model for the imitation of every town and county in the kingdom. It appears from the declaration of the Speakers themselves, that they are *tradesmen* or *manufacturers*. They apologized for their want of ability for the task they had undertaken, and one of them observed, that he had been urged forward, in part, with a view of rescuing Scotland from the disgrace, which the general servility of his countrymen in high life was but too well calculated to bring upon her. Look, then, at these *tradesmen*; read their luminous, eloquent and powerful speeches; compare these with the few disjointed members of sentences, which a Lord frequently, on such occasions, stammers out; or, with the redundant and senseless trash of a brawling "*learned* friends;" make this comparison, reader, and then say, whether you believe that this is an age when hereditary and professional privileges are likely still to make mankind bow implicitly to their nod! *Great* national evils generally, in the end, bring their antidotes; and, as this is a season of uncommon distress and peril, so it has brought forth such a portion of public spirit and of talent as to convince every one, that the cause of freedom is in able hands, and that the affairs of the country would not suffer from the change that may be expected to take place. CANNING once called the Reformers "*a low degraded crew*." If all the best parts of all his hundreds of

do not pay this sum; but, it comes out of those taxes, part, and a large part, of which *you* pay on your *beer, malt, salt, shoes, &c.* I dare say, that the “*decent fire-sides*” of these “*Poor Clergy*” still “*connect themselves with the government.*” The decent fire-sides would be great fools if they did not so connect themselves! Amongst all our misery we have had to support the intolerable disgrace of being an object of the *charity* of a *Bourbon Prince*, while we are paying for supporting that family upon the throne of France. Well! But, is this all? We are taxed, at the very same moment, for the support of *French Emigrants*! And, you shall now see to what amount. Nay, not only *French*, but *Dutch* and others, as appears from the forementioned account, laid before parliament last year.—The sum, paid out of the taxes, in one year for the RELIEF of *Suffering French Clergy and Laity, St. Domingo Sufferers, Dutch Emigrants, Corsican Emigrants*, was, 187,750*l.*, yes, *one hundred and eighty-seven thousand, seven hundred and fifty pounds*, paid to this set in one year out of those taxes, of which *you* pay so large a share, while you are insulted with a Subscription to relieve you, and while there are projectors who have the audacity to recommend schemes for preventing you from marrying while young, and to induce you to emigrate from your country! I’ll venture my life, that the “*decent fire-sides*” of all this swarm of *French Clergy and Laity and Dutch and Corsicans and St. Domingo sufferers* “*still connect themselves closely with the government;*” and, I will also venture my life, that you do not stand in need of one more word to warm every drop of blood remaining in your bodies! As to the money subscribed by *Regiments of Soldiers*, whose pay arises from taxes, in part paid by you, though it is a most shocking spectacle to behold, I do not think so much of it. The soldiers are your fathers, brothers, and sons. But, if they were *all* to give their *whole pay*, and if they amount to *one hundred and fifty thousand men*, it would not amount to one

half of what is now paid in Poor-rates, and, of course would not add half a pound of bread to every pound, which the unhappy paupers now receive. All the *expences* of the *Army and Ordnance* amount to an enormous sum. To sixteen or eighteen millions; but the pay of 150,000 men, at one shilling a day each, amounts to no more than *two millions, seven hundred and twelve thousand, and five hundred pounds*. So that, supposing them all to receive one shilling a day each, the soldiers receive only about a third part of the sum now paid annually in Poor-rates.

I have no room, nor have I any desire, to appeal to your passions upon this occasion. I have laid before you, with all the clearness I am master of, the causes of our misery, the measures which have led to those causes, and I have pointed out what appears to me to be the only remedy—namely, a reform of the Commons’, or People’s, House of Parliament. I exhort you to proceed in a peaceable and lawful manner, but, at the same time, to proceed with zeal and resolution in the attainment of this object. If the *Skulkers* will not join you, if the “*decent fire-side*” gentry still keep aloof, proceed by yourselves. Any man can draw up a petition, and any man can *carry* it up to London, with instructions to deliver it into trusty hands, to be presented whenever the House shall meet. Some further information will be given as to this matter in a future Number. In the meanwhile, I remain

Your Friend,

WM. COBBETT.

This Address, printed upon an open sheet, will be sold by the Publisher, as below, at 2*d.* each, and for 12*s.* 6*d.* a hundred, if a hundred are taken together. Any order from the Country will be supplied by Mr. Clement; but not to a smaller amount than a hundred copies.

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Speeches were selected, they would not amount, in point of *talent*, to what we find in the Speeches delivered at *Paisley* on the 5th of October. It is a very false notion to suppose, that men in this country, are possessed of talents and wisdom, because they possess power and emolument. Just as if the *free and independent electors* of Old Sarum or Gatton kept talents and wisdom in their eye! But, what need of agreement on this score, while such terrible facts stare us in the face! Whether we look upon the present state of the country as having been produced *intentionally* by our rulers, or not, it is a most conclusive proof of their *folly*. It is hardly possible to believe even *dæmons* to have *wished* to occasion such a state of things. But, if we were to admit even this, what so *foolish*, seeing that the mischief has involved themselves in inextricable difficulties and menaces them with utter confusion? And if they did *not wish* to produce this state of things, where were the wisdom and talent which would have prevented it? Away, then, with the preposterous notion, that a man is *qualified* for an office merely because *he fills it*! Away with the notion, that a reform of the parliament would introduce to power men incapable of managing great concerns! If, in the year 1793, there had been taken the first five or six hundred men who entered London by Hyde Park Corner or Bishopsgate Street, and if these men had had the management of the nation's affairs from that day to this, could *they* have produced a *worse* state of things than that which now exists? What could they have done *more* than load the country with eleven hundred millions of debt in war, in order to obtain a peace which has placed the country in a state of such complete beggary that three or four millions of the people are notoriously in a state little short of starvation? What could they have done *more* than issue orders in Council to *compel* the millions in America to manufacture for themselves; than compel the greater part of the continent of Europe to do the same; than restore the Pope and the Inquisition; than drive all the coin out of the country; than reduce the Bank to the point of its notes; than push the country to an enormous debt; than make the people so as to make them more than this? What could they have done *more* than this?



For is it to be believed, that any men on earth, except our bright youths, would have gone *to war* with America, or, a second time with France, in order a second time to force the Bourbons upon her? By their *fruits* shall ye know rulers as well as trees: and, is it *possible* for *worse* fruits to have been produced by any men upon the face of the earth? Were we, in our estimate of their understanding, to go no further back than the present year, how could any men in this world have discovered less? Only think of their boasting, in the most solemn style, of the *prosperity* of the country! Only think of the very first proposition being to expend millions upon monuments to commemorate deeds, which had restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition, and which had extinguished every free state in Europe, while they had brought the deepest misery upon ourselves! Only think of relieving the distresses of the country by making corn and cheese and butter dear! Only think of the project for *relieving* the landowners and farmers by raising fourteen millions of taxes on them to be *given* to the fundholders, that the fundholders might have the said fourteen millions to *lend* to the landowners and farmers! Only think of the distress being *temporary* and to be left to the "*healing hand of time*," which must inevitably augment it! Think! No; one cannot think on such a subject. Indignation swells at every vein and deprives the mind of the powers of thought! But, is it a chastisement of Providence that has fallen upon us, and, of course, not to be avoided by any talent or wisdom? No: for our bright gentlemen, our grave and reverend seniors assured us, all along, that Providence was with them; and, when the war was over, they led us deliberately to the altar to return thanks to Divine Providence for their success. Therefore, they cannot have this plea, without accusing themselves of the grossest hypocrisy. Had they no warning? Were there no means of preventing the calamity? They were warned at the out-set; they have been warned in every successive stage of their fatal progress; the effects of their measures have been all along, minutely pointed out to them; and, they have, a thousand times been not only *told*, that they would bring ruin upon their country, if they persevered, but it was

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proved to them that they would do this; and yet they did persevere! — Where, then, is the danger of a Reform of Parliament introducing to power men *less qualified* to do good to the nation? Confusion! “Such men would throw the “country into confusion.” This is the old and last shift. It has been proved to be false; and, indeed, it needs no proof, that a *whole people* would never choose men to throw their country into *confusion*. But, after all, what is national confusion? What does it *produce*? What are its *mischiefs*? Why, the taking of one man’s property and giving it to another; hardship; suffering; individual ruin; misery; tears; violences; starvation. These are the symptoms of *public confusion*; and do not all these symptoms now shew themselves in most dreadful array, at the end of a twenty-five years of bloody war undertaken for the avowed purpose of *preventing confusion*? What *more*, what *worse*, could have been brought upon us by any description of men?—Far, however, from every good man be the foolish notion, that the OUT faction is preferable to the IN. They have both had a hand in the war; both pursued the same system; both have their share of sinecures and pensions; they were equally averse from peace; both loaded us with taxes, and the OUTS have the *particular demerit* of having raised the Income Tax to ten per cent, and of having *begun* those Orders in Council which gave the great stab to Commerce and Manufactures, and which finally produced the war with America, which also, the OUTS pledged themselves to *support*, long before it was begun. But, the act which makes them one and the same in the eyes of the people; the act which married them and made them one body and one soul, was, their union, their cordial and unanimous union, in voting a sum of money out of the pockets of the people to pay for erecting a monument to commemorate “THE PUBLIC SERVICES OF WILLIAM PITT!”—No, no! There is not the shadow of a mouse’s hair of difference between them. As the people at Maidstone told them, they are “all tarr’d with the same brush.”—There can be *no change* without a change in the mode of *choosing the parliament*.

WM. COBBETT.

TO

MR. JABET, OF BIRMINGHAM.

Showing, that he richly merits the indignation of all the labouring people in the kingdom, and of his townsmen, the people of Birmingham in particular, and that the late disturbances in that town have arisen from the provoking falsehoods published and posted up by him.

Botley, Nov. 6th, 1816.

SIR,—Your having been the cause of a public disturbance in your town; of the calling out of regular troops and of yeomanry cavalry to act against your townsmen; these effects produced by your insolence, or ignorance, or venality, or, all three together, have made you, who would otherwise have ended your days with your name unknown to a greater distance than ten or twenty miles, to be talked of all over the kingdom. As the poor mad pauper, PEG NICHOLSON, became an object of universal conversation by her being said to have intended to stab the King; so you have become famous by insulting the understandings and mocking the miseries of the people of Birmingham.

You are making, it seems, a most pathetic out-cry on the score of your sufferings. You are extolled by the *COURIER* as a *loyal* printer. Do you recollect, when the “Church-and-King” mobs destroyed Dr. Priestley’s Meeting-house? Do you recollect, when *real* mobs were raised all over the country to answer PAINE’s Book by *burning the author in Effigy*? Alas! If the government had followed the *advice contained in that very book*, we should have seen none of those miseries, which are now pressing the people to the earth, and which will finally produce the complete humiliation of all the faction to which you belong.

But, to come to your own case, the history of your disgraceful conduct, as related by your fellow labourer the *Courier*, is this: that you published and posted up the paper, of which I am here about to insert a copy. It appears, that this paper was first published at BOLTON;

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and that you republished it at Birmingham, and posted it up, adding a paragraph of your own, and recommending the whole to the attention of your townsmen. This Bolton paper contains the most gross falsehoods, and yet is very artfully drawn up. It is the production of some cool, crafty knave, who sees that *his* wealth and ease depend on the prosperity of Corruption; and, therefore, you, as a promulgator of such falsehood, and as the tool of such knaves, merit all the indignation that a suffering people can pour out upon such a man.

Let us now take a view of this *Paper*, and, if I do not make good these my assertions; if I do not *prove* this *Paper* to contain a string of gross falsehoods; if I fail in any part of this proof; and, if I do not prove the author and his abettors to be base designing hypocrites; if I fail in any jot of what I have here undertaken to do, I will acknowledge, that I merit as large a portion of public indignation as has been justly bestowed upon you.

Your *Paper*, or Publication, is given to us in the following words:

“The following Address, written by a patriotic Inhabitant of the town of Bolton, has been widely circulated in that populous place, and perused with a deference the relevancy of the subject so eminently deserves:

“Fellow Townsmen.—You have lately heard a good deal about taxation, pensions, and sinecures; and ill-disposed men are endeavouring to persuade you that all the evils you are now suffering proceed from the extravagance and neglect of the Government under which you live. Before you suffer yourselves to entertain so unfounded and dangerous an opinion, listen with calmness to a few arguments as they strike the mind of a plain, unlearned man, who grieves to see you imposed upon by misrepresentations, and in danger of being rendered discontented and unhappy and perhaps turbulent and riotous, by the arts of others.

“We have always had taxes, pensions, and sinecures, and yet we have not always had bad times; nay, it is a fact, that two or three years ago, we had more taxes, and pensions, and sinecures too, than we have now; and yet wages, especially weavers’ wages, were consi-

derably higher than they are at present. Therefore it is evident, that taxes, pensions, and sinecures, are not the causes of the present distress.

“All other countries also are in the same state as our own. In every part of the continent of Europe, and in America also, there is the same stagnation of commerce, as great a decay of trade, and as little employment for the labouring poor, as there is here with us. I put it to your own good sense to say, whether our national debt, and our taxes, can have ruined the trade of America and of Continental Europe.

“And this also proves, that it is not owing to any neglect of our Government that we are now suffering so much. For if an advantageous trade could have been secured by the care and efforts of those who manage the affairs of nations, surely some of the Governments would have found but the means to make their own country prosperous and flourishing: but we see that the same distress prevails every where.

“Therefore it must be something which affects all countries alike that is the cause of this general distress. And that can be nothing else than the change which has taken place from war to peace. All the nations with which we have any concern, have been, like ourselves, so long in a state of war, that commerce had become, at it were, habituated to it. A great expenditure caused a great circulation of money; large armies created a great demand both for food and clothing, methods of disposing of goods were discovered which had never before been thought of; and so, as a sudden transition from peace to war used always to give a temporary check to commercial profits and industry, the change which has lately taken place from a state of war, in which we have all lived so long, to a state of general peace, has had a similar effect.

“Yet we may be sure that eventually peace is better than war. Things will come round again. Trade will resume its accustomed channels. Profits will become moderate, but regular to the master; and wages will become better and less fluctuating to the weaver. The industry of British workmen, and the skill and capital of British mer-

“chants, will finally prevail, so as to obtain for this country a fair proportion of the trade of the world.

“Matters would not be any better at all if the plan was to be adopted which is called Parliamentary Reform. To all practical purposes Parliament is as well constituted as it can be. Opportunities are now afforded to men of all parties to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, and to express their opinions with vigour and boldness. Every question of consequence is fairly debated amongst them, some being of one side and some on another, and all is published and made known to the people at large. And what more can we desire?

“How much money, think you, do these sinecure places, against which so much has been said, take out of your pockets? I am not afraid to say, and many of those who declaim against them so violently know as well as I do, that they do not take from the labouring classes so much as a penny a head in a whole year.—Most of them have been given to the possessors as rewards for valuable services rendered to the country by themselves or their ancestors; and every good Government will, and ought to take care to reward the deserving, as well as to punish the wicked.

“Surely you must yourselves feel that railing against Government, and taxes, and pensions, only makes your sufferings greater, and adds the worst plague of all—I mean that of an impatient, discontented, angry temper. Your minds are inflamed, and your passions are excited to wrath and fury. Thus you torment yourselves and your families. And in this way, your vexing yourselves with politics, and giving heed to those who would falsely persuade you that you are oppressed by the rich, and neglected by the Government, is a greater misery to your mind, and in your homes, than all your other distresses.

“And what would be the case, if unhappily any of you should be stirred up by those angry feelings which boil in your breasts, and by the inflammatory speeches of these designing men, to acts of violence and riot? Your lives would be forfeited. You would suffer a disgraceful death, or be banished from a country whose laws you had broken, and whose peace you had disturbed.

“And then what would become of your families? What would be the sufferings of your wives and children? What the distress of your parents and kindred? What the sorrow and remorse of your own hearts? Listen to your best friends, who advise you to be peaceable and patient; who endeavour to relieve your distresses, and study to make you contented and happy. Tell the men who would agitate and inflame you, that you will not have your minds disturbed by their fury, nor your lives brought into danger for their advancement: that till they are foremost in the charitable and benevolent undertakings, you shall distrust their professions of feeling for your distresses; and finally, that you will quietly and peaceably wait till Providence shall please to restore to you prosperity, satisfied that you shall much sooner attain to it by obeying the laws of God and man, than by acting in defiance of both.”

“AN OLD TOWNSMAN.”

“It will be seen by the preceding address, that very great distress prevails in the District of Lancashire, and which many uninformed and ignorant people imagine must proceed from the causes, so satisfactorily answered above. This town is certainly suffering in some degree, with the world in general; but it is with the greatest pleasure we observe the measures pursued by the benevolent inhabitants, in procuring some kind of employment for those who are unfortunately at this time prevented from attending their regular work; and we trust that these men will manifest a proper sense of the kindness of their richer neighbours, by a uniform, steady, and peaceable conduct.”

The COURIER tells us, that this paper excited great *indignation* amongst the people; that they bade you take down the offensive string of falsehoods; that you refused; that they dashed in the windows in which the Papers were placed; that the military were called in; that an officer was knocked off his horse with a stone; that this officer had been wounded at *Waterloo*! As if his having fought for the restoration of the Bourbons was expected to render his head insensible to the blows of stones and brick-bats!—Next, we are told, that the *Yeomanry*

Cavalry, under the *Earl of Aylsford*, were marching into the town; just as if these wiseacres could, by their caps and swords, pay the interest of the debt, when it is well known, that, in Staffordshire, they, with all their galloping and slashing and all their big looks, were unable to compel a broken bank to resume its payments, though challenged to it by a hand-bill stuck upon the walls! However, peace was, it seems, restored; and you, I am very glad to hear, escaped with whole bones, and was reserved, I trust, to see the day, when events will convince you of the folly as well as the baseness, of your present endeavours. Men of your description are generally very cunning; but, still they sometimes out-wit themselves. You are, I dare say, grown pretty fat upon "*loyalty*." You have found, that there is always most money sticking to the government side of the question; that, to be friends with Justices, Sheriffs, Lords Lieutenant, Parsons, Tax Commissioners and Surveyors, is much more profitable than to be disliked by them. You have, I dare say, long remarked, that it is better to be a lazy fool, with their support, than an industrious clever man without it. You have not failed to discover, that your's was the path of ease and plenty. But, Mr. JABET, give me leave, before I enter upon the examination of your false and infamous publication, to give you a reason or two for my believing, that you may, at last, find, that it is possible for you to carry your reliance, in this respect, *too far*. To abuse and act maliciously towards those, who would have prevented those calamities, *has been*, and *yet is*, a profitable trade. But, that trade may very soon fall off; and, I verily believe, that many will live to repent of having carried it on so long.

You, and men like you, can hardly be made to believe, that any such change will ever take place. It is now *five and twenty years* since there was any real freedom of the press. During that long period Corruption has had all the channels of thought in her power. So many thousands have fallen under her grasp, she has inflicted such and so many terrible blows, that men like you worship her as the American Savages are said to worship the Devil. But, a change is at hand. The reformers have yet many and power-

ful foes; we have to contend against a host of such as never existed before in the world. Nine-tenths of the Press; all the channels of speedy communication of sentiment; all the pulpits; all the associations of rich people; all the Taxing-people; all the military and naval establishments; all the yeomanry cavalry tribes. Your allies are endless in number and mighty in influence. But, we have *one ally* worth the whole of them put together: namely, the DEBT! This is an ally, whom no honours or rewards can seduce from us. She is a steady, unrelaxing, persevering, incorruptible ally. An ally that is proof against all blandishments, all intrigues, all temptations, and all open attacks. She sets at defiance all "*military*," all "*yeomanry cavalry*." They may as well fire at a ghost. She cares no more for the sabres of the Yeomanry or the Life Guards than Milton's angels did for the swords of Satan's myrmidons. This ally cares not a straw about *spies* and *informers*. She laughs at the employment of *secret-service-money*. She is always erect, day and night, and is always firmly moving on in our cause, in spite of all the terrors of jails, dungeons, halters and axes. Therefore, Mr. JABET, be not so pert. The combat is not so unequal as you seem to imagine; and, confident and insolent as you now are, the day of your humiliation may not be far distant.

Already do many of your friends, seeing the strength of our Ally and the tendency of her march, begin to propose measures for *weakening* her; for diminishing her power by degrees; for drawing off detachments from her under the name of *reduction*. Oh, no! She is not to be taken from our cause in this way! She is one and indivisible. She is as staunch as she is strong. She is to be attacked only by sap and mine. She is to be beaten only by *blowing up*; and the explosion is sure to bury her and our assailants in ruins! If you had *sense*, therefore, equal to your greediness and low-cunning, you would be more cautious how you insulted the feelings of your townsmen.

I will now take your assertions one by one, and *prove* the falsehood of them. You begin by saying, that we have ALWAYS had *taxes*, *pensions*, and *sinecures*.

A *sinecure* means a *sham* place; a place with *no duty* attached to it. The word

sinecure is made up of two latin words. *Sine* means *without*, and *Cure* means *care*, or *duty*. So that a *sinecure* is a place without care or duty. Now, these places were, *at first*, places of care and of duty. The *duties* of them have been *abolished*; but the *pay* of them has been kept up. So that there *must* have been a time when there were *no sinecures*, and, accordingly, you must, as to sinecures, have published a falsehood. But, then the amount of the pay! When these places were first made, some of them, with all the duties attached to them, were not worth a *hundredth part* of what they are worth now when no duties are attached to them. In some cases their income arises from a *poundage* on the receipts or expenditure of the nation; so that the holders of them now receive as much upon every million of 70 millions as used to be received upon every million of one or two millions a year! This, then, is a *falsehood* and a *fraud* upon your townsmen, and the publishing of it merited their deep resentment.

But, we have *always* had *pensions*, you say. Yes, there have, for many ages, at least, been pensions to soldiers and sailors and other persons who have served the public. But, is this what *we* mean, what we complain of? You know well that it is not. We complain of the enormous pensions given to those who have never *done any thing* for the public; persons of whom the people have never heard. We complain, that enormous sums are given to Lords and Ladies and their children, while hundreds and thousands of midshipmen and others who have really served the public, to the best of their ability, receive nothing. This has not always been the case, and, therefore, though we have always *had pensions*, though your words are true, your *meaning is false*.

We have always had *taxes*, you say. And who says that we ought to have *no taxes*? But, is there no difference between the eight millions a year, which was the amount of the taxes, when the king came to the throne, and our seventy millions a year? The poor man now pays about 16s. *every year* in tax upon the single article of *salt*. There is no family which does not use a bushel in a year. He pays more than 4d. tax upon every pot of strong beer the price of which is 6d. He pays more than *half* in

tax upon his sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco. He pays an enormous tax upon his *shoes*. Upon his *soap* and candles he pays about 3d. or 4d. on the pound weight. Mr. PRESTON, the Member for ASHBURTON, a great PITTITE, but who now finds it prudent to begin to *cut and run*, acknowledges, that a poor man, who has a family, pays *more than one half* of his wages in *taxes*! Now, we have, indeed, *always* had taxes; but, have we always had taxes like these? No, and it is not more than about eighty years since no such taxes had ever been *heard of* in England. The *Excise*, that curse of the nation, was begun by Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, a notoriously corrupt man; and, let it be observed, too, that this infamous act was never thought of, 'till the parliament, which had been chosen by the people for *three years*, had *chosen itself* to sit seven years.—On this score, then, you utter a *lie in the words of truth*. We have *always* had taxes; but, *never*, 'till of late years, taxes like those we pay at present.

Your next falsehood is, that *all other countries* are suffering in the same degree that this is; that France is suffering, America is suffering, &c. Now, if the *fact* were such, it would be no apology for our government; for it would only prove, that its wars have been a scourge to the world. But, it is false. The people of France are well off compared to us. This has been proved by Mr. BIRKBECK, who travelled all over the country; who examined into the state of the people; who has given a full account of their wages and the prices of food; and who has shown, that the revolution had produced a wonderful change in favour of the people, in spite of all that the Bourbons had been able to do to destroy its salutary effects. And, as to *America*, the fact has been a hundred times proved, that a common day-labourer earns a *dollar a day*, while provisions are cheaper there than they are here. This, then, is another impudent falsehood.

Next comes the old London-Tavern falsehood, that the misery has arisen from a *sudden change from war to peace*; and, you add, upon this head, after asserting, that there is a stagnation of trade in all other countries, "This also proves, that it is not owing to *any neglect of our government* that we are now suffering so much. For if an advantageous

“trade could have been secured by the
 “care and efforts of those who manage
 “the affairs of nations, surely some of
 “the Governments would have found out
 “the means to make their own country
 “prosperous and flourishing; but we see
 “that the same distress prevails every
 “where.” *Neglect?* What do you mean
 by *neglect of our government?* We do
 not doubt, that they do all they can to
 get a flourishing trade; but, we say, that
 they have neglected to cultivate peace;
 that they neglected the advice of those
 who *warned* them, for years, of the con-
 sequence of their measures; that they
 neglected to save the money of the nation.
 We do not accuse them of *inactivity*.
 Faith, they have been too active! They
 have been spending our means in wars,
 funding, and all sorts of active measures;
 and, amongst the rest of their exploits,
 they have *compelled* the Continents of
 America and Europe to manufacture for
 themselves. It was their activity in
 making orders in Council which produced
 the town of “NEW BIRMINGHAM”
 in Pennsylvania, which now threatens to
 rival OLD BIRMINGHAM! It was
 their neglect, however, to treat America
 with *decency*, which produced these con-
 sequences!—But, still, there has been
 and is a *stagnation of commerce* in
 America. This has arisen from our
bankrupt state and from a paper-money
 system co-operating therewith. But, ob-
 serve, the stagnation of *commerce* has pro-
 duced *no misery* in America! *Agriculture*,
 and all *internal trade* flourish. The
 people are happy. No *troops* are wanted
 there to keep the people in order. Not a
petition, not a *complaint*, not a *murmur*!
 —The reason is, that the people have
 scarcely any *taxes* to pay. One half of
 the labourers’ wages is not taken away by
 the government in that country. Hence
 it is, that a stagnation of commerce is felt
 only by a few great merchants and traders.
 And were it not for our loads of taxes the
 same would be the case here. The *farmer*
 in America flourishes. The government
 do not take away his substance in taxes.
 —His profits go to his labourer, and to
 tradesmen and mechanics and manufac-
 turers. Thus all are happy; but, here,
 the government takes so much, that there
 is little left for any body else. Here, then,
 this falsehood, that the fault is *nobody’s*,
 is detected and exposed.

Next comes the falsehood, that the dis-
 tress is *temporary*; that things will *come*
round again; and, that trade and com-
 merce will resume their *accustomed chan-*
nels. At the end of *two years* of peace,
 with every thing still going on from bad
 to worse, what impudence must a man
 have to make this assertion! I believe
 that things will *come round*; but in a very
 different sense. I believe that the evils
 will produce a reform of the parliament,
 and then, I know that all will soon be
 put to rights. But what do you mean by
trade and commerce resuming their usual
 channels? Do you think that you can
 make the Americans, and the people on
 the Continent set fire to their manufac-
 tories, which were actually forced upon
 them by our wars and orders in Council?
 Yet, it is not *trade and commerce* in your
 sense of the words that are so much
 wanted. It is *means at home* to purchase
 and use their goods made at home. Goods
 are now selling in our shops *at the half of*
what they were made for; and, this and
 all the ruin that belongs to it, all arise
 from the weight of the taxes, aided by the
 bubble of paper-money, which has ruined
 hundreds of thousands, and dashed mil-
 lions down into a state of starvation.—
 Well, then, is this cause *temporary*?—
 Will this cause be *speedily* removed?
 Will the “*healing hand of time*,” cure
 this evil? I believe it *will*; but only be-
 cause time will bring a reform of the par-
 liament, which reform would take off the
 greater part of the taxes, and blow away
 the bubble of paper-money. Did you
 never read about the *South Sea Bubble*?
 If you never have, Mr. JABET, I would
 advise you to do it. By that bubble,
 though upon a very small scale, thou-
 sands were ruined; but, *the bubble*
were punished by the confiscation of all
their estates, the value of which was ap-
 plied to the relief of the sufferers. Read,
 read, Mr. JABET, and take a dram before
 you read, lest your teeth should chatter
 in your head! It is false, therefore, to
 say, that the evil is merely *momentary*,
 and that things will *come round*, seeing,
 that the cause, the *load of taxes*, is,
 as you intend, permanent, and is never
 to have an end. The labourer now
 pays away more than one half of his
 earnings in taxes; you do not propose
 to take a farthing of the taxes off; and
 yet you insult him with the assertion,

that things, if *let alone*, will "come round!"

We now come to your impudent assertions, relative to the parliament, which are in these words; words which have earned your most just indignation on the part of the people. "Matters would *not* be any better at all if the plan was to be adopted which is called *Parliamentary Reform*. To all *practical purposes* Parliament is as well constituted as it can be. Opportunities are now afforded to men of all parties to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, and to express their opinions with vigour and boldness. Every question of consequence is debated with *fairness* amongst them, some being on one side and some on another, and all is published and made known to the people at large. And *what more can we desire?*"—In the first place you must acknowledge, that it would be impossible for things to be *worse* than they now are. Then, *why* should they not be better? What do you mean by *practical purposes*? In 1808 (I have no later account) the members of the House of Commons, alone, possessed sinecures, places, and pensions, to the amount of 178,000 pounds a year. Is this a *practical purpose*? The parliament has voted away millions of our money to relieve French emigrants, and Dutch and other emigrants. Is this one of your *practical purposes*? For many years past, they have voted away a million a year to the East India Company out of the taxes. This is, I suppose, another *practical purpose*! For many years past they have voted away 100,000 pounds a year for the relief of the *Poor Clergy* of the Church of England, though that Church has such immense wealth. This is another *practical purpose*. They have voted, during the last 25 years, about *four millions* for carrying on *secret services*. This is also a *practical purpose*. They have, during the same time, doubled the salaries of the Judges and many other persons. This is another *practical purpose*. They have voted away, during the same time, many millions in *addition* to the charges of the Civil List. This is a *practical purpose*.—They have passed act after act to protect the Bank of England against the demands of the holders of its notes. They passed an act to indemnify Pitt and the Privy Council and the Bank Company against

the consequences of their *breach of law* in 1797. They suspended the Habeas Corpus act for seven years at one time, when there was neither rebellion nor invasion. They passed an act to skreen all those from punishment, who had imprisoned, or otherwise punished people during that suspension. When Pitt was discovered to have lent public money to Boyd and Benfield, without any law to authorize him, and when it was proved, that he had thus caused the people to *pay interest for the use of their own money*; when this was fully proved, they passed an act to skreen Pitt against the legal consequences. To all these *practical purposes*, and thousands of others, the parliament has been found to be "*as well constituted as it can be.*" But, for the practical purposes, of holding fast the purse-strings and preventing unnecessary wars; for that of reducing taxes and expenses; for that of punishing speculators; for that of conciliating the friendship of free nations; for that of making the people free and happy, they do not appear to be quite so well constituted as one might wish. They can vote columns to commemorate victories which have restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition, and monuments to commemorate "*the public services* of William Pitt;" but, they do not seem to know how to get off the labourer's salt-tax, or the tax on those shoes which serve to bear him to his toil with an empty belly and a ragged back, while his children are left at home crying for bread.—Therefore, we may conclude, that it is an impudent falsehood to say, that the parliament is as well constituted as possible to all practical purposes.

But, you tell your townsmen, that "*opportunities* are afforded to men of all parties to obtain a seat, and that they may express their *opinions with vigour and boldness.*" What sort of *opportunities* do you mean? However, the records of the House tell us, that Mr. MADDOCKS declared, on the 11th of May, 1809, that he was ready to prove, that a seat had been sold to a Mr. DICK; that Castlereagh and Perceval had had a hand in this; that Mr. DICK, upon declaring to them, that he could not vote with them on the affair of the Duke of York, was called upon to *vacate his seat*, which he did; that Mr. MADDOCKS offered to prove these facts by witnesses at the Bar of the

House; that the House refused to hear the witnesses; and that the ground of this refusal was, that "*the practice was as notorious as the Sun at noon day.*"—This was a "*practical purpose*" with a vengeance! And, with the inevitable knowledge of this fact in your mind, what an impudent, what an insolent, what an unprincipled man you must have been to attempt to make your townsmen believe the above assertions!

You say, that every question "is debated fairly, some being on one side and some on the other." This was great news! But, how often have you seen any side but one prevail? And, besides, upon the great questions of war; of sinecures and pensions; of the taxes; of the sale of seats; and others of vital importance, *how many* have ever been in opposition?—Here, then, is another base attempt to deceive. And, yet, with all these facts staring us in the face, and smarting, as we are, under the accumulated miseries of taxation and paper-money, which have all arisen from the measures of the parliament, because without their consent the taxes could not have been laid nor the money borrowed, you have the intolerable assurance to ask your townsmen, "*what more they can desire.*" I will tell you what *more* they desire. They desire *not to be taxed without their own consent*; they, therefore, desire, that those who pay the taxes should freely choose those who are to enact and vote away those taxes; they desire, that the two or three men at Old Sarum and the two or three men at Gatton, &c. should not send whole scores of members to parliament, while the great town of Birmingham sends no Member, and while Glasgow, Paisley, Manchester, Sheffield, &c. are in the same state; they desire that they may have the choosing of men to represent them and speak their will, because they know, that, then, millions would not be given to French and Dutch emigrants and to the East India Company and the Poor Clergy and for Secret Services; they desire this change, because they desire to be once more happy, which they believe they never shall be until this change shall take place. This is what they desire; and, in spite of your insolent addresses, this desire will be gratified; and, as I firmly believe, within one year from this very day.

You next come to the *amount* of the *Sinecures* and *Pensions*, and the *public services*, for which you say they have been granted. Your remarkable words are these. "How much money, think you, do these sinecure places, against which so much has been said, take out of your pockets? I am not afraid to say, and many of those who reclaim against them so violently know as well as I do, *that they do not take from the labouring classes so much as a penny a head in a whole year.*—Most of them have been given to the possessors as rewards for *valuable services rendered to the country* by themselves or their ancestors; and every good Government will, and ought to take care to reward the *deserving*, as well as to punish the wicked." In making false assertions, men should be careful to avoid *particulars*, and should keep in view the necessity of steering clear of an exposure to easy detection.—Suppose the population of Great Britain to be 12 millions, then a penny a head each, including women and children, would amount to 50 thousand pounds. Now, according to the Official accounts, and taking those accounts to be perfectly fair, the *two* sinecures of LORD ARDEN and LORD CAMDEN amount to more than this sum. Here, then, is a gross and most impudent falsehood at the out-set. And, how many *hundreds* of these sinecures and pensions are there! Well might the people of Birmingham feel *indignation* against you! Well might they be enraged at your conduct!

But, you tell them, that these sinecures and pensions have, *most* of them, been given to their possessors as rewards for *valuable services* rendered the country by themselves or their ancestors. Here are two *salvos*. "*Most of them;*" and then, "*or their ancestors.*" Now, then, what services did Lord Arden or Lord Camden ever render the country, for which they did not receive very high salaries? Of the ancestors of ARDEN I never heard; and, as to the other, his father was a Mr. PRATT, who became a Judge and Lord Chancellor, and was a very worthy man, but was very amply paid. What services did the late Marquis of Buckingham ever render to the Country? When he was in office he always had an enormous salary; and was not that enough? I have no account later than

the one moved for by Lord Cochrane in 1808. In that account I find the *Prince of Meclenburgh Strelitz* down for 2,000*l.* a year. Where shall we look for the history of his services? Lady Augusta Murray, Lady Louisa Paget, and *hundreds of women and girls* are upon the list. What services have they ever rendered? In short, husbands are pensioned, as in the case of Lord Grenville, Huskisson, Long, Napcan, and many more, with a pension to the *wives* after their death, though they have all received great salaries while in office. Hundreds who have never served the country in any capacity. Many *foreigners*, in open violation of law. And, as to the services of *ancestors*, soldiers and sailors have children and grand children very frequently; but, did we ever yet hear of *their* children or grand children receiving one single farthing on account of the father's, or grandfather's, services? I have often mentioned WILLIAM GIFFORD. This man's father was a shoe-maker at Ashburton; Gifford was educated out of charity by a Clergyman; he became tutor to Lord Belgrave, now Earl Grosvenor; he next became the understrapper in editing the Anti-Jacobin news-paper; and from that he became a double sinecure placeman, and now receives out of the taxes above 600*l.* a year. Where are *his* services, or those of his ancestors? He receives as much as would decently support twelve of those midshipmen, who have now not a farthing allowed them, though they may have served many years at sea amidst all sorts of hardships and dangers. — The truth is, that I do not find one single sinecure possessed by any person, to whom I can trace any *public services*, and very few indeed of the pensions, if we exclude those to military and naval men; and these are paid out of other funds, or, rather under other heads; for, the *whole* are paid by *the people*, of whom the labouring classes bear the greatest proportionate share. — Now, then, when you were putting forth your insolent and false publication on this matter, what had you to expect but the indignation of your towns-men? What right had you to hope, that such cool and deliberate insolence would pass unnoticed? If your towns-men had not noticed it; if they had not expressed their indignation at your conduct, they would

have merited contempt. They have rescued their character from the odium, which such tameness would have brought upon them; and, I am pretty confident, that you will now begin to see, that your insolence may not come, at last, to so good a market as you expected.

We now come to the close of your address, which consists of the old *twofold trick*, namely, *coaxing* and *threatening*. You hold a *bason of carrion soap* in one hand, and a *halter* in the other. "Surely," say you, "you must yourselves feel, that *railing against Government*, and taxes, and pensions, only makes your *sufferings greater*, and adds the worst plague of all—I mean that of an *impatient, discontented, angry temper*. Your minds are inflamed, and your passions are excited to wrath and fury. Thus you torment yourselves and your families. And in this way, your *vexing yourselves with politics*, and giving heed to those who would falsely persuade you that you are oppressed by the rich and neglected by the Government, is a *greater misery* to your mind, and in your homes *than all your other distresses*." And, you afterwards desire them to listen to their *best friends*, who advise them to be *peaceable* and *quiet*. If one might retort upon such a canting hypocrite, one might ask you what sort of an *example* the government and parliament have set of a *peace loving* disposition! They have been at war, and preparing for war, nearly twenty-five years, though *every other* power in Europe has, during that period, been at peace with France. There is not one amongst all those powers, with whom our government has not been at war. War in India all the time; and the moment the European peace was concluded, war with America! The present king has been on the throne fifty-six years, *thirty-two* of which have been years of war or arming in Europe or America, leaving India and all its blood out of the question! This is a pretty good example of a *peace-loving* disposition! However, your advice is exactly that which all tyrants, and tools of tyrants have given to the people in all ages. They are not to meddle with *politics*; not to torment themselves with inquiries into the cause of their sufferings; they are to be *peaceable* and *quiet* for fear of making the thing worse. "D—n you, you *contrary* devil, can't you lie *quiet*!"

says the butcher to the pig, which is struggling under his knife. And, it is precisely with this sort of feeling towards the people, that you call upon them *to be quiet*. But your exhortations will have no more weight than those of the butcher; for, the people will never believe, that their *complaining* will make their "*sufferings greater*."

Fearing, apparently, that this coaxing would fail, you conclude with your last resort, *threats*; and here comes out the proof of your base hypocrisy. If you had never done any act but publish this one paragraph, you would have merited ten thousand times the quantity of public indignation that has been bestowed upon you. These are your words, or, rather, the words of your publication: "And
"what would be the case, if unhappily
"any of you should be stirred up by those
"angry feelings which boil in your breasts,
"and by the inflammatory speeches of
"these designing men, to acts of violence and riot? *Your lives would be forfeited*. You would suffer a *disgraceful death*, or be banished from a country whose laws you had broken, and whose peace you had disturbed. And
"then *what would become of your families?* What would be the sufferings of
"your wives and children? What the distresses of your parents and kindred?
"What the sorrow and remorse of your own hearts? Listen to your best
"friends, who advise you to be peaceable
"and patient; *who endeavour to relieve your distresses*, and study to make you
"contented and happy. Tell the man
"who would agitate and inflame you,
"that you will not have your minds disturbed by their fury, nor your lives
"brought into danger *for their advancement*: that till they are foremost in all
"charitable and benevolent undertakings,
"you shall *distrust their professions* of
"feeling for your distresses; and finally,
"that you will quietly and peaceably wait
"till Providence shall please to restore to
"you prosperity, satisfied that you shall
"much sooner attain to it by obeying the
"laws of God and man, than by acting in
"defiance of both."—Then comes the signature of "AN OLD TOWNSMAN," who, I would venture to pledge my life, is a *placeman*, a *pensioner*, or a *parson*. However, Mr. JABET, you have made the thing *your own*, and, therefore, to you we

must look. And, it must be confessed that you have *shaken the halter* at your townsmen in a very terrific manner. But, *for what* are they to be hanged or transported? For *what*? Because they do *not like to be starved*; and because they meet to *petition* the King or the Parliament for a redress of their manifold grievances? Are they to be hanged for these? If not, why do you presume, that they are *in danger* of being brought to an ignominious end? The poor man with a family knows, that he pays away one *half* of his wages in taxes; and, because he calls aloud for a *change* in this respect, is he to be told, that he is exposing himself to the gallows? If he does not lie down like a brute and die without complaining, is he to be told, that he is *mised* by *artful men* who want to *advance themselves*? This latter is a most base and foul insinuation. But it is very much in vogue with the hirelings of corruption. Every man who takes any thing of a *lead* in the work of *petitioning*, &c. is held up as a man who seeks *his own advancement*, and ought to be *distrusted*. Only admit the soundness of this and then tyranny can never be checked in any case whatever; for, to check it, *somebody* must always be foremost; *somebody* must always take the lead. Upon your principle the leaders in the Revolution of 1688 sought their *own advancement* and ought not to have been listened to. Why, you foolish as well as impudent man, does not the officer who volunteers to be the first to enter the *breach* seek *his own advancement* in fame and rank? Yet you would have him to be *distrusted*! Oh, no! The people know better than this. They know well, that their case would be desperate indeed, if there were no men to take *the lead* in the public cause; and, so far from *distrusting* those men, they will place confidence in them and second their endeavours to the utmost of their power.—But, you say, that the people ought to distrust the professions of their leaders, 'till those leaders, *are foremost in all charitable and benevolent undertakings*. Well, and are they not so? The labouring man now pays away *half his wages* in taxes. These political leaders are endeavouring to cause *none* of his wages to be paid away in taxes. Is not *this* the only sort of benevolence that can do the labourer any *real good*?

What! is he to distrust those who would cause this to be done, and he is to *rely upon those*, who take thousands a year out of those taxes, and toss him back a few farthings in the pound under the name of *charity*? But, these *leaders* are sufferers too. They make part of the sufferers. They *receive* none of the taxes. They have nothing to give, and many of them have, perhaps, been *ruined*. But, because they themselves have suffered, they are, surely, not the less qualified for taking a lead in endeavours to remove the cause of the general suffering? The Bank Directors do not appear ashamed to show their heads; yet, they stopped payment of their promissory notes in 1797, and they have never paid in specie to this day. Oh, no! Mr. Jabet, the people are not to be persuaded, that those who live in splendour upon the taxes are their best friends, while those who would take off the far greater part of those taxes are their enemies. They will follow their *leaders* and support them, well knowing that *somebody* must take the lead, or else *nothing can be effected*.

We now come to your grand stroke of hypocrisy. You advised the people to wait peaceably and quietly, till *Providence* shall relieve them. Now, suppose a journeyman, or labourer, were to sit by the fire side, or prowl about the fields, instead of working; suppose his wife and family were to go to the parish for food; suppose the parish officers were to take the man before the magistrates, and he were to tell them that he had peaceably and quietly waited for *Providence* to relieve his family; Would not the said magistrates order this man to be *imprisoned and whipt*? They would tell him, that he ought to have *laboured*, and trusted to *Providence* to *bless his labour*. Just so in the duty, which every man owes his country. He is first to *act*, to do all he can, and then rely upon the countenance and aid of *Providence*. When the tyrant James was driven from the throne and the "*Glorious Revolution*" took place, the people did not *stand still* and wait for the hand of *Providence*. The famous WILLIAM PRYNNE was a very religious man, but, having for no other crime than expressing his opinions, been most inhumanly treated by the Archbishop Laud, having had his ears cut off and his cheeks burnt,

having been fined to his ruin, and imprisoned, as his base persecutor thought, for life, he did not, when better days came, *wait for Providence to bring Laud to the block*; he set to work himself, and never rested, 'till he saw the head of his bloody-minded persecutor roll from the scaffold. But, according to the notion which you have promulgated, no man could ever *stir* in any public matter. For what, then, is there any law about the *right of petition*? How are men to petition, if they are not to *meet*? This law would, in that case, be a vile mockery. It should have been enacted, that, when men had grievances to complain of, they were to leave the matter to *Providence*. They should have been told to pay to *Providence*, and not to King or Parliament.

Your last words are, that your townsmen ought to obey the *laws of God* and man. Now, you wish for *no reform of the Parliament*. You know, that, at every general election, *violences, frauds, perjury*, and *subornation* of perjury spread themselves all over the country. Are these agreeable to the *laws of God*? And, yet, you say, that the thing ought not to be changed; and yet you pretend a respect for the laws of God! Oh! thou vile hypocrite, not another word will I bestow upon thee!

To your townsmen some apology may be necessary for my having made you of so much consequence. But, in fact, it is not *you*. You are merely the tool of others, who push you forward, while they are hidden behind the screen. I make no account of *words* attributed to you. I endeavour to add nothing to your *publication*. That is what I dwell on. You have *published*, and I have *answered*. I disapprove of all violences on your person or property. The cause of reform stands in need of no such proceedings. That cause is built on the everlasting foundations of truth and justice; and, it will finally prevail. But, because I disapprove of a bodily attack on you, I do not disapprove of the expression of indignation against you verbally, or through the means of the press; and, I trust, that you will find, that your falsehoods are not in future to go unanswered and unexposed. Even now, after the event, you persevere in your calumnies. You accuse the reformers of having *caused the*

riot by their inflammatory publications! How false, how impudent, is this! Did the reformers call upon the people to riot? Did their address direct the people to your house? No: it was *your own publication* which incensed the people, and which, at last, produced the violence. Yours was, indeed, an "*inflammatory*" publication; it was abusive, false, and insolent. But, when it had excited violences against you, you ascribed the violence to *other publications*, though, as appears from the account published in the *Courier*, you might, after all, have prevented the violence by taking down the false and insolent publication. It is, therefore, an act of consummate baseness to endeavour to ascribe to the reformers acts of violence, which were clearly produced by yourself. I have proved your publication to be *false* in every one of its assertions; it was also *insulting*, and this I have proved. And, was it not also *malicious*? Did it not endeavour to *expose to public hatred* every man who was taking a leading part in the work of petitioning now going on? Did it not describe those men as hypocrites, as deceivers of the people, as *putting the lives of the people in danger* for their OWN ADVANCEMENT? What could be more malicious than this? And yet, when this vile attempt has excited popular violence against yourself, you complain of *instigators*!

With a sincere wish that no further violences may ever be committed on you, and that you will, in future, employ your press for the interest of truth and not of falsehood, I am

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
LEADERS IN PUBLIC MEETINGS.

GENTLEMEN, the noble Meetings at Manchester, Paisley, and Glasgow, comprising all together more than 120,000 men, and conducted with so much ability and sobriety, have staggered our enemies, especially as they come backed with the heavy blow from the County of Cornwall. The *Courier*, that leading Champion of Corruption, who has been so long complaining of the *violences* of the people, now complains of their *peaceable* behaviour! Hear him: "We have not room at present to discuss how far it becomes mobs of the lowest class to decide upon questions of the most *delicate State Policy*, to traduce the Constitution, to stigmatize the most *exalted* characters, and to *libel the Government*. We shall only observe, that the practice is quite new, unknown before the days of Thomas Paine and the French Revolution. There is, however, ONE POINT to which we wish particularly to call the public attention. Much praise is given to the Meetings at Manchester and Glasgow for their *peaceable* conduct. Why *peaceable*? Because they know that tumult would defeat their real as well as their pretended object. Consider their language! Is that peaceable? Is it not most inflammatory and seditious? *Peace!* They would *keep peace for a time till the crisis is ripe for explosion*. Like the sportsman, they would advance with silent step, and crouching, fawning curs, till they are secure of *killing their game*."

So, you see, it is impossible to please this man. If riot takes place, he declaims against violence and calls for prisons and halters: if no riot, then he calls

for *precaution* against secret designs! Our designs are very *secret* to be sure! We are a very *sly* race! Just as if we did not pretty openly talk of what we want to be done. The foolish man! As if *we* were able to *hasten a crisis*! As if *we* could do any thing to accelerate, or retard, the steady march of events! Just as if *we* could add to distress or to the amount of the *Debt* or that of the Poor-rates! These and the paper-money are the *causes* which are at work; and, how is it in *our* power to retard, or to hasten, their all-powerful effect? All that we can ever assist in doing, is, to hold out *hope*; to direct the eyes of the people towards *reform of parliament* as a something which may prevent *utter confusion*. This is all that any men, that any mass of talent, can possibly effect; and this we are sincerely *endeavouring* to do; though, if the *time* be lost, it is very possible, that we may not be able to do any good at all.

I do think, that I am not presumptuous in believing, that my judgment, as to such matters, is equal to that of most other men. I have been a long and a very attentive observer of the causes now at work. *Thus far* those causes have produced *every* consequence that I have apprehended, only the distress of the country has come *more* speedily and has *exceeded* in amount the time and sum of my predictions. Numerous speakers and writers, of no mean talent, are hastening *now* to proclaim doctrines on political economy, which, years ago, were familiar in my pages, and which *then*, at best, excited attention from their *novelty*, their *singularity*, and their *boldness*, not to say, *temerity*. Many, very many, men of great experience and great abilities, *now* put forth, as *incontrovertible and admitted truths*, many of those assertions, which, when first put forth by me, were

regarded, at best, as the creatures of a strong and unbridled mind under the influence of ambitious singularity, while many severely condemned and some few excused them, as the offspring of that resentment, which it would be a libel on human nature to suppose could ever end but with life.

Nevertheless, I have *now* seen *all*, yea, *every one*, of these doctrines and assertions acknowledged to be *undeniably true*. Upon the credit of this fact, Gentlemen, I now give it you as my decided opinion, that nothing but a reform of the Parliament can afford the country the smallest chance of escaping *utter confusion*. I do not *know*, that even that measure will prevent this horrid calamity; but, at any rate, the very *plan* will be of great service as a rallying point and a ground of hope. When I look at the great causes now at work; when I see them silently worming themselves into every part of the community; when I consider with what truth and certainty they tend to their destructive result; how they join their efforts in their progress; and, with what tremendous force their last blows will be given, with what contempt do I read such trash as that of the Speeches of Castlereagh at Belfast! How contemptible are all the hopes built on the *arrears of taxes*, which are now collecting by the means of *distress*! How contemptible the accounts of *orders of goods* from this or that country! How contemptible the boasting of the Courier about the success of the military and yeomanry cavalry over bands of rioters!

At any rate, let us persevere in the path of duty to our country; and that duty is to be performed in no other way than that of preparing petitions for reform. If you ask me, whether I think, that those who have the power of voting in Parlia-

ment will agree to a reform, I do not know what to answer. I wish they may, and, I am quite sure, that, if I was in the place of one of them, and had *no other motive than that of my own private interest*, I should be the very first to step forth for the measure; or, at least, I would take special care to be *amongst the first*.

CASTLEREAGH'S story, as related in the news-papers, about the declaration of Napoleon, relative to his resolution *to conquer England*, I disbelieve, and, though it only serves us to laugh at in itself, it is of some consequence as a proof of the *shifts*, to which they are driven at last. They perceive that the eyes of the nation are now open; they hear the indignation expressed at the result of the war; and, therefore, this trick is intended to make us believe, that we *might* and should have been *conquered*, if the war had not been pushed on to the length it was! This poor, pitiful *fetch* shows, too, *how little these men know of the real state of the public mind!*

The COURIER is extremely angry with the Glasgow Meeting for resolving, that the *Debt* is not due from the *people*, but solely from those who have had a hand in *voting the loans*, and in electing those who did vote them. It will be unfortunate for this good hireling, if such reso-

lutions should happen to have an effect upon his health; for, he will hear of them from all quarters, I am persuaded, before it be long. Besides, he himself, about four months ago, said, that *the two Houses had borrowed the money*, in order to *save the charge of taxes on their estates*; and, he particularly told the Duke of Bedford, that *his estate* was mortgaged to the fundholders. He should not, therefore, quarrel with the Glasgow Meeting upon this score. But, let him keep himself cool; for if this warms him, how hot will he be by and by!

With great admiration of your zeal and talents, I remain your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

N.B. It becomes an interesting matter to consider what was done at the time of the *South Sea Bubble*: I shall, therefore, very soon open that matter, particularly as Mr. PRESTON and some others appear to me to be got upon a *wrong trail*, as hunters call it, with regard to the mode of *getting rid of the Debt*.